

"Leadership Through Education"

ASPIRA

of Florida, Inc.

ADVISORS*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mr. Ricardo Torres, Chairman
Payton & Rachlin

Mr. Fernando Figueredo, Co-Chair Programs
Southern Bell

Dr. Luis A. Martinez-Perez, Co-Chair Programs
Florida International University

Mr. Mark Gallegos, Vice-Chair Finance
Mitrani, Rynor & Gallegos

Mr. Charles Scurr, Treasurer
Greater Miami Super Bowl XXIII

Ms. Grace Prieto, Secretary
Realtor

Dr. Ivette Arteaga-Morgan,
Dade County Public Schools

Ms. Eloisa Delgado, Ganz Association, Inc.

Dr. Joseph Fernandez
Dade County Public Schools

Dr. Jaime Martinez, Miami Children's Hospital

Dr. Linda M. Peterson, Barry University

Mr. Lee Ramos, Lemuel Ramos & Associates

Two Student Representatives

Mr. Raul Martinez, Acting Executive Director

* THE ASPIRA BOARD OF ADVISORS IS PRESENTLY BEING COMPOSED BY PROMINENT CORPORATE, POLITICAL AND COMMUNITY LEADERS OF GREATER MIAMI.

RESOURCES

We gratefully acknowledge the following government and public institutions, foundations, corporations and individuals for their contributions and support over the years:

GRANTS-FOUNDATIONS

City of Miami

City of Miami Beach

Dade County Public Schools

Dade Community Foundation

Dept. of Justice Assistance

Florida State Department of Education

Ford Foundation

PEW Memorial Trust Foundation

United Way of Dade County

CORPORATIONS

American Bankers Life Insurance Co.

Architects International, Inc.

Arthur Anderson

Aspira of America, Inc.

Association for Retarded Citizens

Burger King Corporation

Cafe Bustelo

Citicorp Savings of Florida

Columbus Printing Company

Comtel Inc.

Cruzali, N.V.

Curamex, Inc.

Dain Bosworth Inc.

Doral Beach Hotel on the Ocean

Eagle Brand, Inc.

Eastern Airlines

First Equity Corporation

Gables Professional Realty

Gonzalez-Vidal, P.A.

Greenberg, Taurig, Askew, Hoffman, Lipoff,

Rosen & Quentel, P.A.

Hervin Rommey Architect, Inc.
Holland & Knight
IBM Corporation
Legacy International Youth Camp
Mercy's Flowers
Monty Trainer
Radio HOT 105
Raymond James & Associates, Inc.
Roche Bobois
Security Plastics, Inc.
Ser-Jobs for Progress, Inc.
Southern Bell
Southeast Bank, N.A.
Southeast Beverage Co.
Sparber, Shevin, Shapo & Heilbronner
Steel, Hector & Davis
The Jose Cobo Company
The Miami Herald
The Printing Image
Sir Speedy Printing
Viva Advertising
Washington Storage Co.
William R. Hough & Co.
Woody's on the Beach
WSUA

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

City of Miami Employees' Holiday
Wish Campaign
Garces Commercial College
Metrozoo
Miami-Dade Community College
Miami Desegregation Assistance
Center of Race
National Origin Desegregation Center
United Teachers of Dade

IMPACT

Aspira of Florida is active in voicing its concerns on issues that directly impact the Hispanic community. Over the last several years it has addressed the problem of Hispanic school drop-outs and advocated for greater awareness and solutions to the issue through the media, legislative hearings, and community networking. Aspira sponsored a well-attended forum "Hispanic Youth: Are They Making It?" at Miami Dade Community College in 1985, and a Parents Forum on the issues affecting our youth in the fall of 1987.

Currently, Aspira of Florida is engaged in a two-year study examining the effects of the community, institutions and student characteristics on Hispanic student retention. The results will assist in fostering an appropriate policy position in Dade County.

Other issues that affect the Hispanic community such as the English Only movement, bilingual education, immigration, etc., are cornerstone to Aspira's advocacy role and its commitment to work for the betterment of our community.



PROGRAMS

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT/ SCHOOL DROP OUT PREVENTION

Aspira's motto "Leadership Through Education" best describes the essence of this program. Through the formation of Aspira Youth Leadership Clubs at various junior and senior high schools, Aspira encourages "at risk" Hispanic and minority students to stay in school by integrating positive "peer model" students and promoting leadership skills training activities. Guided by an Aspira Counselor, these student-run clubs promote initiative and responsibility in planning, implementing and evaluating their weekly meetings and activities. Curriculum areas included in this program are: self-esteem building, drug/alcohol abuse, personal growth and development, career and college planning, group dynamics, etc. An Annual Aspira Awards Night Ceremony gives due recognition to the outstanding students many of whom have demonstrated a turn-around in their lives.

The Aspira Club Federation, composed of student officers elected by their peers in each club, further provides a leadership experience for the aspirantes. This county-wide network facilitates planning and governing of the clubs, as well as elects its student representatives who participate in the Aspira Board of Directors. A student is also represented on the National Board of Directors of the Aspira Association.

Educational counseling is also a key component to this program. Viewed as a non-threatening, caring friend who is neither a school nor parental figure, Aspira counselors are able to counsel students and develop a relationship that is rather unique and effective.

PROGRAMS

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT/ SCHOOL DROP OUT PREVENTION

Aspira's motto "Leadership Through Education" best describes the essence of this program. Through the formation of Aspira Youth Leadership Clubs at various junior and senior high schools, Aspira encourages "at risk" Hispanic and minority students to stay in school by integrating positive "peer model" students and promoting leadership skills training activities. Guided by an Aspira Counselor, these student-run clubs promote initiative and responsibility in planning, implementing and evaluating their weekly meetings and activities. Curriculum areas included in this program are: self-esteem building, drug/alcohol abuse, personal growth and development, career and college planning, group dynamics, etc. An Annual Aspira Awards Night Ceremony gives due recognition to the outstanding students many of whom have demonstrated a turn-around in their lives.

The Aspira Club Federation, composed of student officers elected by their peers in each club, further provides a leadership experience for the aspirantes. This county-wide network facilitates planning and governing of the clubs, as well as elects its student representatives who participate in the Aspira Board of Directors. A student is also represented on the National Board of Directors of the Aspira Association.

Educational counseling is also a key component to this program. Viewed as a non-threatening, caring friend who is neither a school nor parental figure, Aspira counselors are able to counsel students and develop a relationship that is rather unique and effective.

PUBLIC POLICY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The Ford Foundation has sponsored this three-phased intensive academic and mentoring program in the field of public policy which provides up to 15 high school students with the opportunity of observing and analyzing social, economic and political issues, problems and interests. This enables the students to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to assume responsible and effective leadership roles.

Phase I - 15 students participate in core curriculum and foundation for 12 weeks.

Phase II - 5 students undertake a practical community experience or internship with local community leaders for 12 weeks.

Phase III - 1 student is selected to go to Washington, D.C. for a one month paid summer internship with U.S. Congressmen or a national organization.

Thus far, we are proud to have had Aspira students serve their internships with the following mentors:

Rep. Mike Abrams, District 101; Mark Bailey, Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce; Paul Cejas, Dade County School Board; Rep. Arnhilda Gonzalez-Quevedo, District 112; Seth Gordon, Citicorp Savings of Florida; Barbara Ibarra, Dade County Government; Julio Martinez, Hialeah Councilman; Cesar Odio, City of Miami Manager; Sergio Pereira, Dade County Manager; Dr. Rosa Castro Feinberg, Dade County School Board; Xavier Suarez, Mayor City of Miami; Rosario Kennedy, Vice Mayor City of Miami; Miller Dawkins, Commissioner City of Miami; Andrew Kassier, Public Defenders Office; Janet McAliley, Dade County School Board.

HEALTH CAREERS

The Aspira National Health Careers Program is designed to increase the number of Hispanic and other minority youth entering the medical professions and to instill a sense of community service upon their completion of studies. The Program includes recruitment through outreach, counseling, placement assistance, workshops on financial aid, on improving interviewing skills, trips to colleges and health institutions. The Health Careers Fair and Medical School Conference is an annual event.

YOUTH GANG PROGRAM

Project GAIN (Gang Awareness and Intervention Network) was funded by United Way as a direct response to increasing youth gang activity in Dade County. Established in South Miami Beach as a pilot program, Aspira joined in a collaborative effort with the Boys Club and YWCA in providing multi-disciplinary services to identified youth gang members and at risk youth.

The program includes individual daily counseling and placement in jobs, vocational training, GED programs, academic tutoring, career readiness, recreational sports and social activities.

Close collaboration with the Miami Beach Police Dept., Feinberg-Fisher Adult Community School and The Police Athletic League has also been key to the success of this program.



STUDENTS

Over 3,500 students have been served in Aspira's various programs since 1981. Representing our multi-ethnic and multi-racial community, 70% of the *aspirantes* have been Hispanic and 30% Black American and Haitians.

Presently, the Aspira Youth Leadership/School Drop-Out Prevention Program is available to Hispanic and other minority students from twelve (12) junior and senior high schools: Booker T. Washington, Jr., Citrus Grove Middle, Edison Middle, Edison Sr., Filer Jr., Hialeah Jr., Jackson Sr., Nautilus Jr., Robert E. Lee Jr., Shenandoah Jr., Miami Beach High and Miami Senior High.

THE ASPIRA PROCESS

Aspira is not a "rehabilitative" program which is forced upon the students for a certain period of time. Students enter the program and may stay, grow and develop for any number of years.

Although membership into Aspira is voluntary, Aspira encourages referrals of indentified school drop-outs by teachers, school counselors, or parents. In several schools, Aspira's program is offered as part of the school's own drop-out prevention program. Aspira believes however, that by incorporating peer model students with at risk students, the group dynamics, assumption of leadership roles and sensitive peer counseling that ensues promotes greater success in turning around and positively influencing the students.

As Aspira of Florida matures similar to its counterparts across the country, our *aspirantes* will emerge to occupy leadership roles in the community embedded with the Aspira philosophy of service.

ASPIRA BACKGROUND

Aspira of Florida, Inc. is a private not-for-profit organization founded in 1981 by Dade County community leaders concerned about the increasing school drop out rate among Hispanic students. As an associate to the national Aspira Association, Aspira of Florida celebrates in the 27th anniversary of the first non-profit organization in the United States dedicated to encouraging and promoting education and leadership development among Latino youth.

With national offices in Washington, D.C., Aspira associates are located in New York, New Jersey, Illinois, Pennsylvania and Puerto Rico, as well as Florida.

MISSION AND GOALS

Aspira's mission is the development of a better educated, more community-conscious Hispanic youth. Central to this mission are three major goals designed to prepare our youth as the future leaders of our community:

- to develop the leadership potential of Hispanic youth and foster a commitment to dedicate their skills to the advancement of the community.
- to motivate, orient and assist Hispanic youth in their intellectual, personal and cultural development through counseling and educational services.
- to advocate for greater access to quality educational and leadership programs and opportunities.

Aspira of Florida firmly believes in the development of other minority youth and to that end it also commits its efforts and resources.

NAME AND SYMBOL

Aspira is not an acronym but rather a Spanish word meaning "to aspire to something greater." It is this forceful theme that guides the youth to work and strive for excellence in themselves and their community.

The pitirre is the symbol of Aspira. A small, fragile tropical bird found in Puerto Rico, the pitirre is known for its agility, rapid flight and its ability to outsmart, tire and defeat larger birds such as the hawk.

The symbol reinforces Aspira's belief that even the smallest and seemingly most powerless can take control of his/her own life and bring about change.

Aspira of Florida, Inc.
2902 N.W. 2nd Avenue
Miami, FL 33127
(305) 576-1512



A United Way Supported Agency